

Lake Notes

W. K e r r S c o t t D a m a n d R e s e r v o i r

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NATURAL RESOURCES LAKE OF THE YEAR

By: Penny Schmitt

Nestled in the western NC mountains, W. Kerr Scott Lake exemplifies the mountain spirit that can turn a bit of wood into a hand-made instrument, fashion a work of art quilt from stray scraps and raise an abundant life on the back of community cooperation and inventiveness. The staff, superbly augmented by volunteers, community organizations, businesses and contract work force members, has intensively developed every possible resource. Together, they have made the lake a multi-faceted jewel, diamond-sharp in its efficiency and effectiveness and showing flashes of real brilliance in its cultural resources and recreational opportunities.

That's why the lake has just been selected as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2007 Natural Resources Management Project of the Year Award winner. The lake was recognized for its achievements at the Senior Leaders Conference Banquet on August 6 in Providence, Rhode Island with a presentation plaque. By the end of August the lake will receive a \$25,000 award. The intent of the cash award is to help fund one of the Projects FY 2007 unfunded natural resources management goals.

Mountain folks may be independent, but they know they can't 'go it alone.' That's the idea behind W. Kerr Scott's many close partnerships with community and regional organizations, its O&M contractor, and more than 400 volunteers. The values added by these partnerships have resulted in a superb outdoor amphitheater facility that instantly became the focus for heritage music and theater events, addition of mountain biking and other trails that have been designated as parts of National Park Service trail systems, and initiatives that join the project with regional heritage tourism attractions like the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area and the Yadkin River Heritage Corridor. The community support exemplified by the efforts of the W. Kerr Scott Lake Friends of the Lake, the Wilkes County Chamber of Commerce, the Eastern National Cooperative Association, the Yadkin River Greenway Council, Brushy Mountain Cyclist Club, Golden Leaf Foundation, the Wilkes County Playmakers, and a variety of North Carolina state agencies and others are invaluable.

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Dock in the Spotlight



Many of you may have noticed the 5 slip community dock at Malone Bay. This is the only community dock on the lake at this time and it's very well constructed. The Corps encourages community docks, as it reduces the number of individual docks. There is a minimum requirement of 3 slips and the community dock must be 200 feet from any other dock. If you belong to a Homeowners' Association, are interested in applying for a community dock and you meet the criteria, call for more information.

Shoreline Allocation...

What's That?

Prohibited: Located in Corps park areas and around the dam. No docks allowed.

Protected: These are areas of the shoreline that the Corps has set aside to protect certain natural areas.

Limited Development: Areas of the shoreline where private docks may be placed under permit and as spacing allows.



~ REGULATION REMINDERS ~

Electric Lines

Rangers are finding numerous illegal electric lines as we complete routine inspections. Lines have been found on government property and within the flowage easement lands. In both areas, electricity may only be installed for a boat lift or pole-light. There must be a permit on file and the fee must be paid. In addition, the electricity must be installed by a licensed electrician and a certification signed by the same. Light fixtures and receptacles must be above 1080' elevation.

Underbrushing

Clearing is only allowed in the designated underbrushing area associated with a dock permit. This is usually 25 feet on either side of the dock. Native trees such as dogwood or holly can not be cleared. A list of approved native trees for planting is available by request. Additionally, there must be some type of vegetation growing every 15 feet in the underbrush area.

Dock Use

Docks are to be used for permittee's boats only. Boats belonging to others and excessive personal equipment are not allowed. Only items related to lake recreation should be stored on the dock in a storage container. Chairs and tables are only allowed for day use and must be removed when not in use. Storage containers can only be 24 sq. ft. in size.

Vehicles

No type of vehicle is allowed below the orange line (public lands). This includes ATVs and golf carts. Several violations have been noted this summer.

Driftwood Removal

With the lake levels down, it's a perfect time to pile and burn driftwood. However, you must have a permit or permission to do so. In addition, you should have a county burning permit before beginning this activity. Call the shoreline ranger to ask about removal or burning of driftwood.

From the NC Wildlife Resource Commission

RALEIGH, N.C. (Aug. 16, 2007) – Do you know about the law that requires boaters in the proximity of a flashing blue light to slow to a no-wake speed?

Many boaters do, but for those who might not, a campaign to heighten awareness of North Carolina's "Blue Light = No Wake" law is being extended.

Effective Jan. 1, 2007, state law NCGS 75A-17(f) requires all watercraft operators approaching within 100 feet of a law enforcement vessel displaying a flashing blue light to slow to no wake speed and use caution in passing. In narrow channels, the distance becomes within 50 feet of a law enforcement vessel displaying a flashing blue light. Violators are subject to fines up to \$250.

"It's an ongoing effort," said Capt. Chris Huebner, boating safety coordinator for the Wildlife Resources Commission. "While there's been excellent news coverage, we want to make every effort to get the word out and increase cooperation. Officers would rather see compliance than write a ticket."

The "Blue Light = No Wake" law has been compared to the move-over law for highways, which requires motorists to move into a lane away from a law enforcement or emergency vehicle with flashing lights, if possible, and to reduce speed.



For more from NCWRC, check out their website at: <http://www.ncwildlife.org/index.htm>

Lake of the Year, cont'd from Page 1

Yet these partnerships can be measured in more than \$680,000 in non-federal grants and donations to support development efforts at the lake, and more than 4,000 hours of volunteer services. These successful partnerships have also earned the project a \$750,000 federal modernization grant and a \$10,000 'handshake' grant, used to complete major projects like the Ft. Hamby Park modernization and amphitheater and a stretch of National Overmountain Trail. Not satisfied to focus on just two these showcase projects, the W. Kerr Scott staff leverages every talent for the community's benefit, whether it is the skilled photographer who invited NASCAR greats to promote water safety, or the Spanish-speaking ranger who has initiated a learn-to-swim program for Hispanic visitors. A staff initiated project offers split wood for camper purchase, putting earnings toward a new environmental education center, where rangers—now North Carolina Certified Environmental Educators— will present interpretive programs. These and many other outstanding examples of stewardship make W. Kerr Scott the pride of its entire region, and a great credit to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers!



Staff of W. Kerr Scott receiving the prestigious "Lake of the Year Award."

From left, Terry Ramsey, Operations Manager, RG Absher, Asst. Manager, Lt. General Robert Van Antwerp, Ranger Jory Shepherd, Ranger Chad Eller, Bob Sattin, Chief of Operations (Wilmington District)

Meet a Ranger.....

Jory Shepherd, a Natural Resource Specialist, has been with the Corps for almost 12 years. Jory is familiar with all aspects of operations having served as Field Office Assistant, Lead Recreation Ranger and now Lead Shoreline Ranger. Recently, she received certification from the state of North Carolina as an Environmental Educator. A native of Wilkes County, Jory is dedicated to preserving W. Kerr Scott's resources for the enjoyment of future generations. Jory was selected as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2007 Natural Resources Management Recreation Employee of the Year Award and was presented an award plaque in August in Providence, Rhode Island. Her integrity, professional skills, devotion to duty and selfless service have rendered her richly deserving of this national honor.



Mrs. Shepherd is participating in the 2007 Wilmington District LDP program. She helped acquire electronic gate systems for the lake's campgrounds and greatly improved training and mentoring for contractor Park Attendants. Most recently, she overhauled and upgraded the lake's permit management system.

What are Flowage Easement Lands?

~FLOWAGE EASEMENT LANDS are sometimes delineated by blue lines on trees~

A. Intent of Acquisition. The Corps of Engineers holds a flowage easement over lands located between the Government fee boundary to the 1080' msl elevation. This easement specifically prohibits structures for human habitation and/or structures that may interfere with project operation during periods of flooding. Also, the easement requires that prior permission be obtained from the Operations Manager before any structure or facility can be placed on easement lands/waters. These restrictions will insure that the extent of the flowage easement estates is not compromised and that damage or danger to life and/or property is reduced during flooding.

B. General Policy

All structures suitable for human habitation or that can be modified to accommodate human habitation are prohibited.

All structures that interfere with project purposes (flooding) are prohibited.

Any structure that could be severely damaged or destroyed in the event of flooding are prohibited.

Placement of materials or substances that may cause harm to people, water quality, or the environment during a flood event are prohibited.

C. Prohibited Structures and activities include the following:

1. Structures for human habitation as mentioned above.
2. Structures with enclosed sides
3. Wells and well houses.
4. Camping units, motor homes, camping vans, or any other temporary means of human habitation.
5. Attachments of houses such as: sun decks, steps, and basements.
6. Septic Tanks.
7. Electric lines without a proper Corps of Engineers utility license and electrical certification.

D. Activities on Easement lands that do not require permission from the Corps

Landscaping & flower beds

Removal of vegetation

Fences, picnic tables satellite dish, grill, and dogpens.

E. Structures and activities allowed with written permission

Septic tail lines (not septic tanks)

Open sided structures

Filling and Construction on Easement Lands. Filling or construction on easement lands utilizes space allocated for the storage of floodwaters. Proposed earth-moving operations, including dredging, or construction on these lands must be reviewed by the Corps of Engineers to determine affects on flood storage, wetlands and erosion. The Operations Manager must be contacted for written permission before proceeding with these activities. A general requirement is that there be no net loss of water storage space at any given elevation.

EYE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Bald Eagle

Recently, there have been many sightings of a *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (better known as the bald eagle), especially in the Lewis Fork Creek Area, so keep your eyes open!

Did you know

Length: 28-38"

Wing Span: 6-7-1/2 Feet!

Diet: fish, carrion, reptiles, birds and small animals.

Will wade into shallow water to catch prey.

The Bald Eagle is the national symbol of the U.S. and is found on the presidential seal, money and stamps.

A Bald Eagle was released at Smithey's Creek Park in 2004.



RANGERS STEP UP ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION.....

~ If you have a chance, swing by one of the park entrances to see the new Environmental Education Information Boards. Rangers have been working on environmental themes for each park. In addition to the new and improved information board styles, there will be environmental education programs to support each topic.

~ New and improved posters have been added on Lakeside Nature Trail, near the Visitor Assistance Center. This ½ mile trail is perfect for a short hike with small children or anyone interested in nature. The educational posters are a great tool for teaching stewardship and environmental education!



W. Kerr Scott Trails

Hiking or mountain biking is an excellent way to "get back to nature." Brushy Mountain Cycling Club, has done an outstanding job building and improving trails. Dark Mountain has over 7 miles of trail. Another popular trail is the section running from the Visitor Assistance Center all the way to Bandits Roost Campground. This section is a little over 5 miles. For more information on BMCC, visit their website: <http://www.bmcc.us/>

In 2006, volunteers constructed a trail in Fort Hamby Park, which leads to the actual Fort Hamby Site and a trail in the campground which leads to a beautiful woodland waterfall. For more information on Fort Hamby History, visit:

<http://www.wilkesnc.org/history/hamby/>



Friends of W. Kerr Scott Lake, Inc.

Accomplish Projects

Set Future Goals



Friends of the W. Kerr Scott Lake, Inc., are setting high goals and going the extra mile to reach them. This fledgling, 501 C 3 organization, established in 2006 through a legal agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers of W. Kerr Scott Reservoir in Wilkesboro, works collaboratively with the Army Corps to preserve and enhance the W. Kerr Scott Lake and surrounding lands. This year, Friends has focused on two major projects—the development of waterfowl habitat improvement areas and the beginning phases of construction of a Environmental Education Center located in the Visitor's Center. The Waterfowl Habitat Improvement Project, which is funded through monies raised by Friends and a grant from the state, would require the construction of water control structures and pumping equipment to control the flooding of the two areas and to establish a wetlands environment. The lake, which is situated on the Yadkin River, is considered part of the Atlantic Coast fly way for waterfowl migrations. What that means is that as birds migrate from the north in fall and winter to locations along the Atlantic Coast, they will cross these areas where they will be able to find food and resting areas.

The Environmental Education Center, which is the focus of Friends' grant writing efforts, will provide students, K-12,, with hands-on-education activities directly related to and in support of the N.C. Science Curriculum. Planning is underway to build an environmental education center in the downstairs portion of the 20,000 square foot facility of the W. Kerr Scott Dam Visitor's Center, which is located near the Dam and overlooks the lake. The purpose of the W. Kerr Scott environmental education center will be to teach the principles of environmental education to students and youth through a laboratory and exhibit area featuring hands on exhibits. In addition, there will be an outdoor classroom/educational trail to provide opportunities for experiential learning. The facility contains a 3,000 sq. ft. unfinished basement which is ideal for conversion to an operating environmental education center and bookstore. The new Environmental Education Center (EEC) will be operated daily and available free to the general public and school system. Through partnerships with the regional school systems it is envisioned that teachers will bring their classrooms to the EEC and be taught in both indoor and outdoor classrooms. 10,000 public school students in Wilkes County and 66,000 students in neighboring systems may be reached. It is estimated that another 5,000 children may be reached through, boy scouts, girls scouts, 4-H, Eckerd Youth, and YMCA day-camp activities. Teachers will select from a variety of environmental subject matter including, pollution abatement, solid waste, water resources, forestry, wildlife, endangered species fisheries, conservation, recycling, soils, and other earth science related themes. Kerr Scott maintains a staff of rangers certified by the state in environmental education and will lead each school group while at the ECC. The environmental education center will be situated adjacent to an outdoor learning lab with an interpretive nature trail.

But Friends activities are also about having fun. Friends members routinely cut wood at different campsites, providing wood for sale to campers and benefiting Friends projects. On Earth Day, Friends volunteers combed the lake and surrounding land picking up 2,000 lbs of trash. And on May 26, from 2 to 6 p.m., Friends will sponsor the first ever Take A Kid Fishing Day. The event is a collaborative project also involving N.C. Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

Hardees, Brushy Mountain

Smoke House, US Food Service and Mike's Bait and Tackle. The 75 children registered, and their parents, will be treated to a free day of fun—pontoon boat rides and fishing excursions on the lake, water-safety training, hot dog cookout, ice cream, goody bags and prizes. Friends anticipates that Take A Kid Fishing Day will become an annual event, with many tall tales being passed down through the years about the big one that got away (was released!).



Native Plants At The Lake

Strawberry Bush ~ *Euonymus americanus*
Celastraceae Family (Staff-Tree)

Other Names: Bursting Heart or Hearts a Bursting



Photo by: Jory Shepherd, Purlear, NC (2006)

Plant Type: This is a shrub, which can reach 70 inches high. The stem is green and somewhat angular.

Leaves: The leaf arrangement is opposite. Each leaf is toothed.

Flowers: The flowers have 5 Regular Parts. They are greenish sometimes purplish. Blooms first appear in late spring and continue into early summer. The flowers are born in small clusters (sometimes single) at the end of stems emerging from the leaf axis.

Fruit: A bright red, warty, four sectioned capsule that splits open revealing four shiny red berry like seeds that remain attached to the open pod.

The flowers of this shrub are not very eye-catching but the red fruits that persist on the plant for sometime are very showy. The straight green stems are sometimes seen bitten off by deer that like to browse on the plant

Calendar of Events

You and your family are always invited to the programs at the campgrounds (usually Friday and Saturday evenings) There is live music, fun activities, crafts for kids and water safety programs. Programs are free of charge to the public. Call the Visitor Assistance Center or Bandits Roost (921-3190) to find out what's going on!

August 24 at 7:30 – History of Appalachian Music by R.G. Absher, Bandits Roost Amphitheater

Beginning October 18—Moonshine and Thunder, The Junior Johnson Story—Forest's Edge Community Amphitheater (Fort Hamby Park, South Recreation Road, Wilkesboro)

October 20th—National Public Lands Day. Mark your calendars if you want to volunteer.



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*Lovely in any
Season*

